

SECRET

23 December 1965

SecDef Requirements for a Report on Damage to Railroad and Highway Bridges in North Vietnam

The SecDef would like to have prepared a comprehensive report on attacks on major railroad and highway bridges in North Vietnam. This should include the main highway routes into Laos as well as the routes from the China border to Hanoi and Haiphong which have come under significant US attack. SecDef would like for this study to show the time intervals at which traffic has been restored following major attacks; this would reflect the total periods for each bridge and highway route covered that interdiction has been successful according to the best photo reconnaissance and other available intelligence. As a third input the report should indicate the schedule and effectiveness of restrikes on highway and railroad bridge targets together with an indication of the time interval between the strikes and the period which the North Vietnamese may have established full or partial transport capability.

SecDef suggests that the presentation might be made with the use of maps and overlays but this is not a firm requirement if a narrative presentation turns out to be more practical. The study should focus on major bridges over all rail and major highway routes. Since the stress of the report is on Vietnamese capability to repair and re-establish bridges which have been attacked, together with a reflection of the effectiveness of restrikes in such situations, the attacks on the hundreds of small bridges on relatively unimportant secondary routes in the course of armed recon operations should be excluded from this study.

It is further desired that ORR ^{of} and CIA participate in the preparation of this report in a manner similar to that of the regular monthly joint CIA/DIA studies of bomb damage in North Vietnam.

While SecDef has suggested that he could use the report by the middle of next week, he said he could hold off till the end of next week, (i.e., 31 December). In this regard we should keep in touch with his leave schedule — which may afford a little leeway.

In describing this requirement, SecDef indicated his concern at the degree to which we are using our quota of 600 sorties per month to insure the most effective degree of interdiction, particularly on targets which have been previously struck.

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